

# NI Bulletin

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July 2021

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# Numismatics International Bulletin

**Vol. 56**

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## Table of Contents

Eric C. Hodge

**Earliest Portrayal of a UK Merchant Countermarked Dollar 89**

Dale Seppa

**A LEGEND REVISITED: The “RA” countermarks allegedly from the Galapagos Islands 97**

Joseph Uphoff

**Book Review 113**

Dale Seppa

**Obituary of Michael John Anderson 114**

We begin this issue with an article about early countermarked British dollars

This is followed by a discussion of a countermark found on certain Galapagos Island coins and how it came about.

I then provide a review of a book devoted to images of meteorites and comets found on ancient coins.

We conclude with an obituary of a long time member.

As usual, submissions are welcome.

Joseph Uphoff

Editor

## EARLIEST PORTRAYAL OF A UK MERCHANT COUNTERMARKED DOLLAR ?

ERIC C. HODGE

I am always searching for more information on the numismatic subject of UK merchant countermarked dollars, issued in the fifty

year period c 1780 to 1830. (See Coin News December 2005 pages 33-35).

The 'bible' for this series is the book published in 2001 by Spink, for the British Numismatic Society, written over 40 years by Harrington E. Manville,



*Fig. 1 Harry Manville*

(Fig. 1) and entitled 'Tokens of the Industrial Revolution - foreign silver coins countermarked for use in Great Britain c 1787-1828', (Manville). This book was also the winner of the 2002 book prize of the International Association of Professional Numismatists, a very prestigious award.

Virtually all countermarks for this series are found on Spanish-American 8 reales. There is, however, one issue that is all on

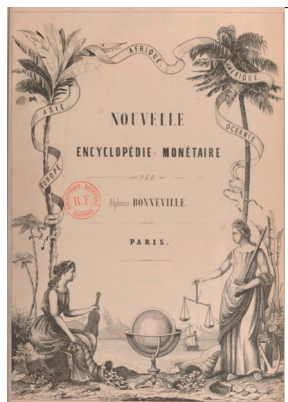
French 5 francs coins, that of 'Payable at Dalzell Farm'. (See Coin News October 2017 pages 49-51).

Recently in a random internet search I entered in Google 'Contremarque anglaise' and on the fifth page of results was [www.livre-rare-book.com](http://www.livre-rare-book.com) which amongst a list of numismatic books and articles mentioned one of particular interest.

The article was entitled 'Contremarque Anglaise sur une pièce de cinq francs de 1811' (English countermark on a 5 francs coin of 1811) 'par Robert Mowat.' It was published in the Bulletin International de la Société Française de Numismatique, Paris, Tome Premier (first issue) Année 1902 pages 5 to 9.

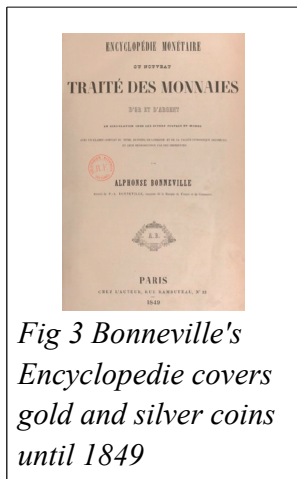
The name Mowat was fascinating because I had heard of it before. In 2000 both Harry Manville and myself (with my wife's help on the linguistic skills angle) wrote separately to the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques asking if they had any examples of UK merchant countermarked dollars in their collection. The translated reply I received was "I have checked our classifications where we would record Scottish and English Merchant countermarks, (country of origin, country of countermark, special series of countermarked coins.) I confirm that we have no examples of such coins."

This reply, therefore, seemed to put an end to that particular search area.



*Fig 2 Alphonse  
Bonneville's  
Encyclopedie  
Monetaire*

However, in 2009 I attended the XIV<sup>th</sup> International Numismatic Congress (held every six years) in Glasgow. The Congress is to 'provide an international forum for scholarly exchange'. Well it



*Fig 3 Bonneville's  
Encyclopédie covers  
gold and silver coins  
until 1849*

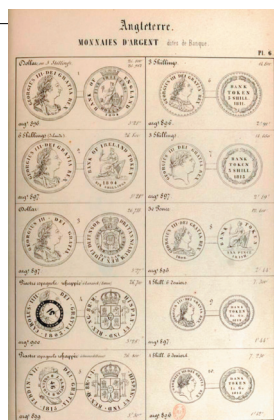
certainly did that for me. One delegate that I met, Jacques Meissonnier, was from the Archaeological museum of Dijon and he was a numismatist. I spoke of countermarks on French coins and he was interested to hear more.

We continued our correspondence after the Congress and eventually it lead to his assistance in translating an article I had previously published in the Spink Numismatic Circular for October 2006, pages 265-7, 'An Unusual Host for a Special Hostess' which was about the Dalzell

Farm countermarks on French 5 francs

coins. The French article was eventually published in the Bulletin de la Société Française de Numismatique for June 2012 pages 196-9. During the research and writing of this French article my colleague from Dijon discovered an example of the Dalzell Farm countermark in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques. It was referenced 'M.7936/ex R. Mowat, 16 August 1910' and was countermarked on the reverse of a French Napoleonic 5 Francs 1811 mint mark A (Paris). This was where I had previous knowledge of the name Mowat and with the initial R the chances were very good that it was Robert. I Googled Robert Mowat and on the fourth page under [www.data.bnf.fr](http://www.data.bnf.fr) he was listed as born in London on the 19 June 1823 dying in Paris on the 14 November 1912, a prolific numismatic and archaeological author in English and French. This information on the death in Paris in 1912 seemed to tie in

reasonably with the attribution for the coin as received at the museum in 1910.



*Fig 4 The chapter Monnaies d'Angleterre contains ten illustrations of British and British colonial coins*

The next step in the research was to obtain a copy of the article and as I was organised to visit the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge in the near future I searched their web site ([www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk](http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk))

Collections>Collections Overview>Coin& Medals>Coins & Medals>Library & Archives>Periodicals>pdf>and on page 27 was Bulletin International de Numismatique. Société française de numismatique, Paris '1902: vol 1 nos 1-4;'. So I knew the Bulletin was in their files and on my next visit I was able to take a copy.

In the article, on page 6, was (in translation) 'Analogous countermarks of the same origin have been published by Alph. Bonneville (Monetary Encyclopedia, chapter on England, pl. 6, fig. 4 and 5). (Fig. 2) Here was another name I

recognised from Manville, Alphonse Bonneville.

I Googled 'Alphonse Bonneville' and on the second page I found [www.gallica.bnf.fr](http://www.gallica.bnf.fr) > ark: which brought up a book entitled 'Encyclopédie monétaire : ou Nouveau : Traité des Monnaies : d'or et d'argent : en circulation chez les divers peuples du monde.../ Paris : Chez l'auteur, rue rambuteau, No 22 : 1849'. I was able to download the book, freely provided by Bibliothèque nationale de France, through 'Gallica' to iBooks. From the

description it was obvious the book was about gold and silver coins of the world in the period up to 1849. (Fig. 3)

Further research provided the information that Alphonse Bonneville was born on the 13 April 1799 in Sens, Champagne, France and died on the 12 June 1877 in Montmorency, Ile de France at the age of 78 years. His occupation was listed as Officier d'infanterie.


In this encyclopedia, pages 41 to 44 are headed Monnaies d'Angleterre. Following page 44 are 10 plates of British and British colony coins. On plate 6 were line drawings of two countermarked dollars. (Fig. 4)

Number 4 is a Lanark Mills 5/ on a Charles III 1803 8 reales of the Nueva Guatemala (NG) mint assayer M (Manuel Eusebio Sánchez).


Number 5 is a J. & A. Muir Greenock 4/6 on a Ferdinand VII 1815 8 reales of the Mexico City mint assayers JJ (Joaquin Dávila Madrid & José Garcia Ansaldo).

(Fig. 5)

I then referred to Manville to see if these coins had been listed.

1) On page 116, under J. & A. Muir Greenock 4/6 is listed  ? 1815 JJ Not traced. Reported by Meili in the collection of Alphonse Bonneville 'of England' in 1897.

The mintmark is now confirmed as Mexico City, from Bonneville.

2) On page 148, under Lanark Mills 5/ is listed  1803 FT or TH. Not traced. Reported by Meili in the collection of Alphonse Bonneville 'of England' in 1897.

The Mexico City mint is incorrect in Manville and should be replaced by Nueva Guatemala and the assayer's initial should be M, both as per Bonneville.

These detailed were intriguing, though Manville gives no further information. It is obvious that Manville never saw the Bonneville book. In a search of Manville's Numismatic Guide to British and



Irish Printed Books 1600-2004, volume III of his Encyclopedia of British Numismatics there is no mention of Bonneville. There are, however, two entries for Mowat (listed as MOWAT, Major R., of Paris) one in 1895 and one in 1896 but both relate to Roman research. I also looked at Manville's Biographical Dictionary of British and Irish Numismatics, volume IV of his Encyclopedia of British Numismatics. There is no listing for Bonneville but Mowat is listed as Mowat, Robert Knight (1823-1912). Artillery officer in French Army. Born in London etc.

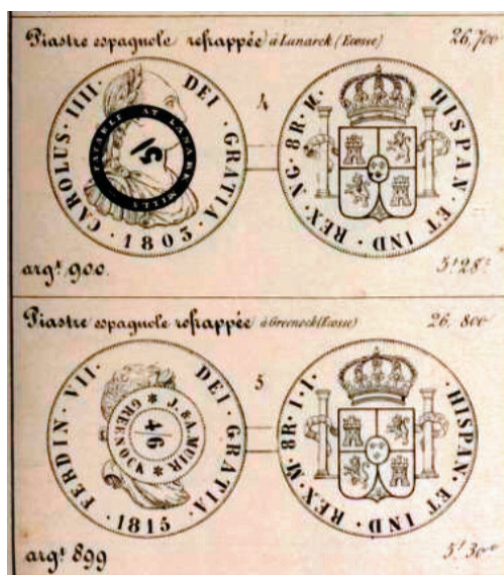


Fig.. 5 Line drawings of countermarked dollars - Lanark Mills 5/ (top) and J.A. Muir Grennock (bottom)

I then turned to the Meili reference seen in Manville. In Manville's Encyclopedia volume IV (mentioned above) Julius Meili (Fig. 6) is listed as '(1838-1907). Of firm Cramer Frey & Co., Zurich, Bahia and Rio de Janeiro, export merchants. Swiss national, resident in

Brazil, retiring to Switzerland. Author: including *Das Brasilianische Geldwesen 1645-1822 part 1, Zurich 1897.* This book includes a section on British countermarks. In 'Notes:' are included 'He possessed an unrivalled collection of Brazilian coins'... 'However the principal British interest lay in the Scottish and English countermarked coins and electrotypes he collected while in Brazil.'

I have access to this Meili book and the relevant details are:-

- 1) on page 234 No 31, a Lanark Mills 5/, is referenced to a 'Peso, datirt 1803, bei Alphonse Bonneville, Angleterre, planche 6, Nr 4.'
- 2) on page 234 No 39, a J. & A. Muir Greenock 4/6, is referenced to a 'Peso, datirt 1815, bei Alphonse Bonneville, Angleterre, planche 6, Nr 5.'

These are the details that Manville picked up, but somehow never took it any further. It is interesting, however, that where Meili indicates that Bonneville was 'from England' (Angleterre) with no inverted commas, Manville lists him as 'of England' with inverted commas as if this allocation was questionable.

Though we find that both Mowat and Bonneville refer to their merchant countermarked coins as 'English' I think it fair to accept their use of this term was generic for Great Britain, because all three countermarks were in fact used in Scotland. What has been discovered, however, is the earliest known portrayal of UK merchant countermarked dollars dated within 20 years of the estimated period end for these issues. What is now to be done is to trace these two coins. No records are known for them other than these Bonneville line drawings. It is certainly possible that they now reside in a French museum collection or even a private French collection.

The hunt is on!



*Fig. 6 Julius Meili*



Since no one has ever presented even a single primary document that substantiates the legitimacy of the “RA” countermarks on Ecuadorian coins I feel that is high time that we review the evidence, issue a death certificate and move on to other things. That legend has caused some collectors to pay rather high prices for coins with countermarks allegedly from the Galapagos. In my opinion if one wishes to purchase an example as a curiosity that is fine as long as the price is not much more than the value of the host coin.

The slow death of the legend began when the Krause/Mishler *Standard Catalog of World Coins* modified its Galapagos Islands listing to read “Without documentation, these pieces must be considered suspect”. Eventually the listing was removed from the KM catalogs.

When the “Legend of Rogelio” was completely debunked, some adherents for the legitimacy of the countermarks suggested the possibility that the “RA” monogram of Rogelio Alvarado were really an “AR” monogram of Arturo Reed: the administrator of the Hacienda/Ingenio El Progreso on Chatham Island (now San Cristóbal). Reed was appointed in early 1904 shortly after the death of Manuel J. Cobos-[Villavicencio](#), the owner of the hacienda and kept that position only a few months. The timeline and various other factors have now completely disproven any possibility that Reed had anything to do with countermarked coins. For that reason I have eliminated most references to him in this document. It is hard to believe that Alvarado would spend time and money countermarking coins with no apparent benefit. All I can do is recite a brief history of Rogerio Alvarado-Villamar to see if it causes the reader to support or disbelieve the “RA” theory. It should be noted that Dr. Gregory Brunk (now deceased and greatly missed), a well known writer about this type of material, was of the opinion that all of them are fantasies and stated that the purpose of token coinage is to avoid tying up specie, a goal which would not be achieved by countermarking circulating, silver coinage.

## "RA" COUNTERMARK DETAILS



## Photos courtesy of Heritage Auctions

There are a few anecdotes (all post 1960) about the countermarks but they are typically of the same quality as the Hans M. F. Schulman article in the March 1970 issue of *Australian Coin Review*. In that article Schulman stated that Alvarado considered Chatham his own kingdom and any visitor who did not accept his money or his rule was invited to one of his daily orgies. In the midst of the festivities, the floor would open and the visitor would fall into a dreary dungeon. Schulman went on to state that "His reign lasted for several years, until too many visitors disappeared..." See Schulman sale of Feb. 6, 7 and 8, 1969. That listing was apparently used to cobble up his article.

Although Alvarado has peacefully rested in a well-marked tomb in Guayaquil, with his wife and father-in-law since 1943, some have written that he was killed in a revolution in Peru and others have written that nobody knows what happened to him. It is obvious the stories about him and the Galapagos countermarks have not had any serious research or objectivity.

According to his son, and substantiated by various genealogical sites, Alvarado was born in Daule about 1873. He opened a store in Guayaquil about 1902 with money given to him by his grandfather. It was called "La Olimpia" and contrary to what his son said the address shown in his last ad in 1908 was Calle Pichincha Number 104 and Luque Number 100 in Guayaquil. His earliest known ads are in the newspaper *EL DEBER* published in Babahoyo on 1 May and 21 August of 1898. No address is



shown in those ads, however, I believe he started in Babahoyo and moved to Guayaquil in about 1901. Based on the newspaper ads that I have found I can prove that La Olimpia actually opened in Guayaquil in on or slightly before 1901 and probably closed shortly after October of 1908.



The above ad appeared in EL TIEMPO Guayaquil on June 6<sup>th</sup> 1908. I suspect Alvarado already knew he was going broke and was trying to get rid of what merchandise he had left..

According to Alvarado's son, his 35 year-old father met the 18 year-old Josefina Cobos-Baquerizo, heiress of Manuel Julian Cobos, at his store, in about September of 1908. Shortly thereafter, they were married. I think he was already going broke and she probably appeared to be an attractive catch as I believe she had some capital and was probably receiving some monthly income from the administrator in charge of El Progreso. After the marriage Alvarado took over the de jure management of her affairs including the hacienda/sugar mill on Chatham

and needed workers to allow El Progreso to regain its status as a profitable entity.

There is an article about Alvarado in *El Tiempo*, Guayaquil dated December 7 of 1909. To me it seems to be a puff piece that Alvarado got published by hook or by crook. It is made to appear that Alvarado was on Chatham for the months of October and November in 1909. There is no proof that he wasn't there but other than that article there is no indication that he was actually there during that period of time. In the article there were at least a couple of lies and several promises for the future; which, to the best of my knowledge, most were never realized. In the interview with the son of Rogerio Alvarado it is stated that his recollection is that his father never went to the Galapagos until 1912 or 1913. So we are presented with conflicting information.

In *El Tiempo* – Guayaquil, dated April 12, 1910 (Written on San Cristóbal (Chatham) on March 19th) there is an article that purports to show the production and shipment from El Progreso sugar refinery. I think this may be another puff piece engineered by Alvarado as the tonnages seem extremely high to me.

Many believe that Alvarado's workforce on Chatham (now San Cristóbal) was mostly convicts but based on the records I have obtained it seems very few were judicially sentenced to the Galapagos. Cobos and later Alvarado probably paid a small amount to authorities in Guayaquil for some prisoners. Those officials were probably happy to get rid of them so they didn't have to pay anything for their upkeep. In the period from 1904 to 1927 I find almost no references to prisoners officially sent to the Galapagos. Those references are few and far between and usually say something like – so and so was sent to the administrator on Chatham and I presume since the administrator had virtually no government resources he just gave them to the hacienda as de facto slaves. Until the mid 1940s no government authorized prison colony existed on the Galapagos in the twentieth century.

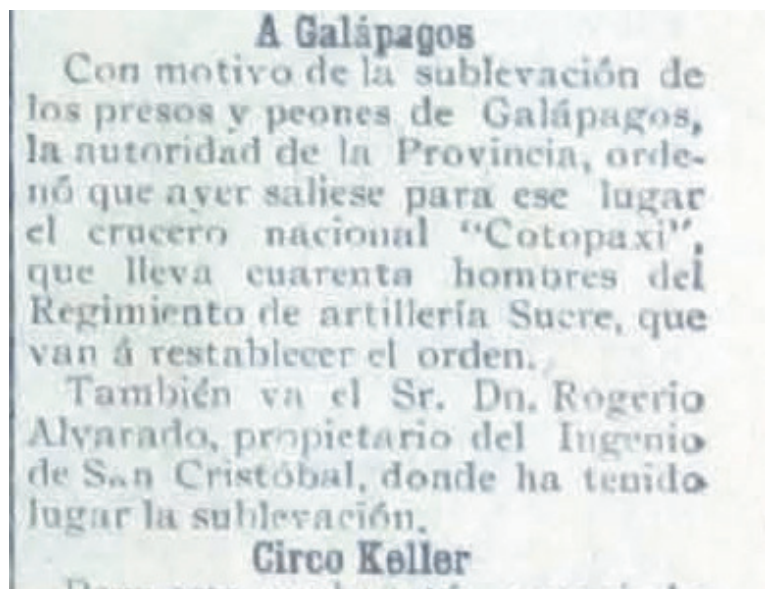
In a letter from Félix Ortiz dated October 31, 1910 and published in *EL TIEMPO* – Guayaquil on November 1, 1910 he states that Alvarado is essentially a con man. According to him Alvarado offered workers a salary of 40 Sucres a month and food before the employment contract was signed. When they were on the ship to the Galapagos he then told



them that times are tough so they will only get 30 Sucre a month and they have to pay for their own meals. When they went to collect their pay the accountant stated he had only been authorized to pay them 20 Sucre a month. On payday their store debt was deducted and they were paid the balance in scrip with face values of various denominations.

A letter from Miguel Núñez published in *El Tiempo* on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 1910 states that he had separated himself from the position of Territorial Chief of the Archiepiélago de Colón and Administrator of the Ingenio Progreso belonging to Rogelio Alvarado. He further stated that his letter was in response to a letter from Alvarado that was addressed to him and published in *El Grito del Pueblo* in the last days of October [unavailable]. He went on to state that the peons of the Ingenio Progreso had gathered at the government house and said that Sr. Alvarado was going to pay them with some papers with a value of \$1 and \$0.50 and for that reason they wanted government guarantees.

A letter from San Cristóbal dated June 5, 1911 under the heading "COLON" appeared in *El Tiempo* of July 1, 1911. The writer said that since Sr. Miguel Núñez quit being the Territorial Chief and Administrator of "El Progreso" the residents have become victims of Sr. César Aray-Santos and that even under Manuel Julian Cobos things had not been as bad. The writer lays all responsibility for the mutiny of May 21, 1911 on Aray-Santos. Alvarado had arrived in early June on the cruiser Cotopaxi when it was sent to quell the rioting workers. When the workers complained to him he supported Aray-Santos and made inflammatory statements that only made the situation worse according to the writer. The item of principal importance to this paper is that the writer clearly states that the only money known on the island was scrip denominated one Sucre and larger and that fractions of the Sucre were little pieces of cardboard with the hope the wretched workers would damage them with their sweat and this would result in a regular profit for the sugar mill. The scrip was printed by Imprenta Mercantil in Guayaquil; the same company that had printed earlier scrip for Manuel Julian Cobos which was also used by Arturo Reed for the short time he was manager. As an aside: the cruiser *Cotopaxi* returned from the island on June 20<sup>th</sup> carrying about forty mutineers. If there is any further information on their disposition I have not been able to find it.



**Above article is from *El TIEMPO* Guayaquil of 6 June 1911**

On February 17, 1913 *El Tiempo* – Guayaquil published a short article about the Galapagos and mentioned that Cobos had issued his own paper and metallic coinage to pay his workers. They did not mention any issues by Reed or Alvarado.

In January of 1918 Manuel Augusto Cobos-Baquerizo, Alvarado's brother-in-law, arrived on Chatham after studying in France for several years and they ran *El Progreso* as partners. I doubt if young Manuel would have wanted coins countermarked with Alvarado's initials after he arrived on the island.

We know that many, if not most, of the large, silver sucres and two decimo coins were withdrawn on the mainland in 1905. During the 1916 - 1927 period most of the rest of the Ecuadorian silver coinage was probably withdrawn from circulation or hoarded.

I have read more than a dozen first-person accounts of people who lived on or visited the Galapagos during the 1905 - 1940 period. Almost all mention the story of Manuel Julian Cobos. Often mentioned is his son Manuel Augusto Cobos but there is almost no mention of Rogerio Alvarado and none of the accounts mention countermarked coins.

By 1927 Alvarado owed at least 400,000 Sucres. Various court battles ensued which ultimately caused him to lose everything. Nobody has ever explained to me where this indebted con man would have gotten the specie to countermark. He went from financing to refinancing as often as he could and there is no indication that he ever had any excess hard cash to speak of. Prior to her death on September 20th, 1933 his wife, Josefina Cobos de Alvarado, had left him, purportedly because he was a drunk. He died, reputedly broke and still in debt, in Guayaquil on July 1, 1943. He is buried in a mausoleum in a cemetery in Guayaquil with his wife and father-in-law.

## THE LEGEND OF ROGELIO

Some may try to refute some of my assertions by citing "The Legend of Rogelio". Firstly, his name was "Rogerio" not "Rogelio". His son was named "Rogerio" and his tomb in Guayaquil shows his name as "Rogerio". *El Ecuatoriano* for July 12, 1909 published the official list of persons receiving merchandise from the customs house and they show his name as "Rogerio". Almost every mention of his name that I have seen shows "Rogerio". Nevertheless "Rogelio" has occasionally been used for the same individual, most notably in "The Legend of Rogelio".

The version shown below is the same or very similar to what I remember of it from when I first saw it sometime in the late 1960s or early 1970s.

THE LEGEND: *The Governor of Guayaquil conceded the authorization to Rogelio Alvarado Director of Collections of the Jail "Germania" for the introduction of coins to the Galapagos Islands; one year later and with that legal base there will circulate in the Archipelago only sucre coins with a monogram countermark with the letters RA entwined, corresponding to the name of the jail's responsible person.*

*("El Gobernador de Guayaquil en 1883 concede autorización de Rogelio Alvarado Director de Colecturía de la Cárcel "Germania" para la introducción de monedas a las Islas Galápagos; un año después y sobre esa base legal circularán solamente en el Archipiélago monedas sucres con el resello del monograma en letras entrelazadas RA, correspondientes al nombre del responsable de la cárcel.")*

1. Rogerio Alvarado was eleven years old in 1883.
2. He did not arrive in the Galapagos until at least 1909 (or maybe 1911 or 1912).
3. "Director de Colecturia" (Director of Collections) is not a term used in early 20th century Ecuador nor at any time prior to that.
4. I can find no documentary proof or even vague references to a "Cárcel Germania" (Germania Jail) in any records available to me. The convicts on Chatham lived wherever they could find a place although the owner(s) of El Progreso did provide some crude housing for the workers.
5. There was no "responsible person" for the jail because there was none other than a room in his house that Manuel Julian Cobos occasionally used to incarcerate some of his employees. Some, but not all, workers at El Progreso were convicts. They had choices; they could eat (if they worked), die or run away to some uninhabited area to fend for themselves.
6. Until at least September 1904 the money typically used on the island, was the proprietary scrip and tokens issued by Manuel Cobos and accepted in the El Progreso store. Most transactions were probably "on the books" but anyone who wanted cash was paid with scrip.

7. There is no such title as "Gobernador de Guayaquil" in 1883. There was a "Gobernador de Guayas" the province in which Guayaquil is located. Additionally, the non-existent Governor of Guayaquil could not have issued such an authorization in 1883 as the regulation describing the new Sucre coins was not issued until the end of May 1884. This is well documented in many places but *A Numismatic History of Ecuador* by Anderson is the only one that I know of in English.

#### OCCURRENCES (Or lack thereof)

A dedicated, numismatic bibliophile kindly did a review of many older references. He started with the Christensen, Coin Galleries and Schulman catalogs, as well as many Fixed Price Lists issued in the 1940s through to the end of the 1950s without encountering any of the "AR" or "RA" countermarks. Rather surprising there was nothing in Schulman's offerings and not because he didn't handle any countermarked Latin American coins. He came into a large consignment of countermarks which were auctioned in April 1953 but they were largely West Indies items on various Spanish Colonial coins. Another good possibility was Stack's prior to the Coin Galleries series. Adams also rates a dozen or so Stack's sales in the 1940s and 1950s as having "Americas" content. However, there was nothing there nor in a few of the 1930s Stack's sales. Stack's issued about 60 fixed price lists during this same period and he was able to check about two-thirds of them without any luck.

Wayte Raymond was an interesting possibility as he was a very knowledgeable dealer, catering to an upscale clientele and handled some important items. His auctions during the 1930s, 1940s and early 1950s were conducted under his name or under the J. C. Morganthau label; all of both series were checked without results. He also issued fixed price lists under the *Coin and Medal Bulletin* title and then *Coin Topics*. Nothing there either. Bolender and Bluestone also had nothing.

Our bibliophile also noted that Almanzar, Peters and other possibilities didn't start issuing catalogs until after 1960. Alfred Buonaguro and Eric Hodge were kind enough to provide copies of some of them listed in the old Almanzar catalogs but there were many other small dealers. Most of

them were less widely circulated than the catalogs of the "big name dealers" so few are extant. Fixed Price Lists and auctions of small dealers of this period are so numerous that the possibilities are virtually infinite.

Other possible sources such as Burzio's *Dictionary of Latin American Numismatics* have been checked without result. The Gutttag collection cataloged by Edgar Adams in two separate editions and sold at auction by Kosoff over a series of sales in the early 1940s drew a blank; not found in the Ecuador section or in the unidentified countermark section of either edition. A few of the later Kosoff sales are rated as containing "Americas" material but nothing there either.

Our bibliophile, subsequent to the appearance of the original article, added a few observations which I show verbatim. "When I examined old sale catalogs some time back I was specifically looking at sales prior to the 1960s on the theory that finding any such offerings would preclude their creation as exclusively modern (post 1960) fakes. However, I did examine all the Almanzar sales and fixed price lists in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s since you recalled that he handled several of these items and indeed we could find three different examples, as I recall. I did not examine any Jess Peters sales since they began in 1964. Similarly, I only looked at Schulman, Stack's, Christensen etc. prior to 1960.

If for some reason one wanted to find all Peters offerings there are quite a few others in that series as it began in sale catalog format in September 1965 and ran through January 1984. There were a dozen or so sales before 9/1965 but they are in mimeographed format. There are a few fixed price lists too as indicated."

## CONCLUSION

After a thousand or more hours of research any possible motive for the Galapagos countermarks continues to elude me. I am unable to perceive any practical use or fiscal advantage for Alvarado. It would be cheaper and easier for any owner or manager of the El Progreso sugar mill or the company store to continue to use the scrip for as long as possible. The cost was negligible and additional profits would be accrued if any of the items were lost or destroyed. If forced to use national, legal tender it

would have been easier to just use the base-metal coins or banknotes from the mainland. As Dr. Gregory Brunk says “the purpose of tokens is to make a cheap substitute for specie” and of course it would make no sense to use circulating silver coins for such a purpose.

At the end of this brief review, preceded by countless hours of research, I agree with a statement by Holland Wallace (sadly now deceased) that no “originals” exist. If most silver coins disappeared from circulation on the mainland before 1916 I am not quite sure how they would have had them far out in the Pacific Ocean or why Alvarado would use some cockamamie scheme to retain silver coins when, if he had any, they could have been turned in or melted with the proceeds used to buy banknotes or the national base-metal issues.

As a last minute note I add a couple of comments – the first, in its entirety, by Dr. Gregory Brunk from an unpublished 2016 manuscript.

*“Large numbers of “R A” fantasies appeared in auctions beginning in the 1960s after it was suggested the initials somehow indicated the Galapagos Islands. As with many fantasies ... different stories were devised by crooked dealers to sell the pieces. Some claimed the initials indicated a government authority or a prison colony. One story was they are the initials of a pirate who took over the islands until expelled by the Ecuadorian navy. Today, they are most often claimed to be initials of a plantation owner who stamped them for use as tokens. But that explanation makes no sense as the countermarks appear only on silver coins, and the purpose of tokens is to make a cheap substitute for specie. The writer has noted over 150 examples of these fakes! They are mostly on Ecuadorian silver coins. Apparently a number of dealers started making the fantasies as there are a number of varieties of the stamp, none of which shows any wear. [I assume here that he meant wear on the punch as many of the “RA” coins are themselves worn. das] There are other varieties, and even the letter “R” sometimes was claimed to be an issue of the islands as a way to give value to junque.”*

I have personally reviewed almost three thousand PDFs of Ecuadorian newspapers from the period in question. The search strings used included “Rogerio Alvarado”, “Rogelio Alvarado”, R. Alvarado, “Arthur Reed”, “Arturo Reed”, A. M. Reed, Arthur M. Reed, Arturo M. Reed, “moneda”, ficha, “Galapagos”, “Archipiélago de Colón”, El Progreso”,

“plata” and many others. I have read most (maybe all) of the available, pertinent articles in their entirety and there is absolutely no mention of anything relating to “RA” countermarked coins. The same is true for the dozens of books on the subject that I have had access to.

As full disclosure I must mention that *La Previnoticiario*, supposedly published by the Banco la Previsora in the early 1950s is said to make reference to the RA countermarks. However I believe this is someone’s error as I cannot find any bibliographical listing that would substantiate that such a publication ever existed. Also, it should be noted that in an interview with Alvarado’s son he vaguely alludes to the countermarks. However, in my opinion, this interview is not very clear or was hurriedly transcribed. It was taken when he was 86 years old and as an octogenarian myself I can attest to memory failures of some oldsters. The interview can be found in *La Moneda Ecuatoriana: A través de los tiempo* by Melvin Hoyos

A first-person report or a listing in any book, article, fixed Price List or auction catalog printed prior to 1957 would go a long way toward proving that legitimate examples exist.

It should be noted that other countermarks are attributed to the Galapagos to wit: a six pointed thing that looks like it was made with a Torx driver, at least three different styles of rosettes, and several different “R”s. To the present date I have never seen any primary document that would support a relation to the Galapagos for these various countermarks.

The following publications are needed to further the study of these countermarked issues. They appear to be unavailable but I list them in case someone can gain access to them. Without an intensive search by a very dedicated Spanish speaking person with time and money it is unlikely these desirable sources will ever be found.

*El Grito del Pueblo* “in the last days of October” 1910.

*Diario El Telégrafo*, Guayaquil, noviembre 7 de 1912, p. 2

*Manuel J. Cobos - Historia de un Pionero* by Jacinto Gordillo, Galapagos (1987)

*La Previnoticiario*, Guayaquil, 1940 - 1950 by Banco la Previsora (Very critical!!) This may be a figment of someone’s imaginagtion so even a



detailed bibliographical entry to prove its existence would be of great help.

Some of the other newspapers published in Guayaquil during this period were; *El Mercurio* 1908 - 1911, *El Pobrecito Hablador* 1910 - 1915, *El Guante* 1910 - 1926, *El Globo* 1911 - 1933, *El Grito del Pueblo* 1916 - 1918, *Patria* 1906-1933, *Voz de la Verdad* 1922-1924. Any of these publications dated 1908 - 1933 could have useful information. I have not been able to access any of these periodicals for the relevant time period.

Any other periodical from Guayaquil, Daule or any city in the province of Guayas during the 1909 - 1930 period could have information on Rogerio (AKA Rogelio) Alvarado, El Progreso, or La Olimpia, the store Alvarado owned from about 1901 to 1908.

Xavier Alban, Michael Anderson, Alfred Buonaguro, Gregory G. Brunk, Eric Hodge, Holland Wallace, David Wolfer and others provided information and other assistance which was critical to the development of this article. Banco Central del Ecuador, Biblioteca Ecuatoriana Aurélio Espinoza Polit, Herman Blanton, David Castro, Gladys Guallo-Yambay, Melvin Hoyos, Alan Luedeking, Brian Stickney, Vicente Veintimilla, John Woram and others published or made available to me pertinent information and/or provided advice, comments and/or documents that were of help. David Fiero PhD (another “old timer” sadly deceased) did marvelous work on some of the translations that were beyond me.

The purpose of this article is to engender more interest in the subject with the goal of substantiating, clarifying or debunking any statement that I have made\_\_or acquiring documented proof of original countermarked coins from the Galapagos. Due to a lack of documentation, this is a work in progress and subject to alteration based on new information. Any factual mistakes, poor translations, misinterpretations or flaws of logic will be mine and not that of any contributor. I have been working on this project, at the behest of Colin Bruce (another now sadly deceased), off and on, since about 1990 and have yet to find any credible evidence that “original” RA countermarks exist. If anyone has any verifiable information I, literally beg that you share that information with me.

Some of this material was previously covered in two articles published in the Numismatics International Bulletin to wit: “*AR or RA Monogram Countermarks of the Galapagos Islands.*”, *NI Bulletin*, Volume 50, Nos. 11/12 and “*RA Countermarks of the Galapagos Islands – Part I - Punch Types and Varieties*”, *NI Bulletin*, Volume 52, Nos. 1/2. Parts of those articles have been used with additional material to substantiate my original thesis.

“In some circumstances it can be safely assumed that if a certain event had occurred, evidence of it could be discovered by qualified investigators. In such circumstances it is perfectly reasonable to take the absence of proof of its occurrence as positive proof of its non-occurrence”. — *Copi, Introduction to Logic (1953), p. 95*

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As with many works, this one begins with dedications to whom made it possible. At the end of one of these is a website whereby one can find coins and other items of interest. This would be: [http://meteorman.org/Meteorite\\_Coin.htm](http://meteorman.org/Meteorite_Coin.htm). Further introductory remarks include a useful grading guide and an explanation of the abbreviations for the metals the Romans used which is aimed at any beginner to numismatics.

In the actual introduction a quote from the Book of Acts is employed. However, the author places this book in the Old Testament when it is a New Testament work. This is followed by a series of definitions as well as stories of various deities with coins showing them. At the end of each description is made mention of whose coin is being pictured. The author then shifts to examples minted by the Seleukids with a brief biography of each. This is followed by Roman examples lead by Augustus and ends with Severus Alexander. At the end of some of the biographies are comments relating to the scarcity of the pieces illustrated.

A few problems emerge as one reads this work. It could have been edited better as there are several typos throughout. Structurally, Zeus' origin story can be found in two places. Oince is sufficient. And finally, coins of Antiochus III should be discussed before his successor, Seleukus IV. The author reversed these.

Despite these problems, it worth the read especially for the information it does provide and illustrations of the coins along with detailed descriptions.

Joseph Uphoff

## Michael John Anderson, Dec 1, 1938 - Apr 9, 2021



Michael was interested in coins from a very early age and studied them intensively for virtually his entire life. During his lifetime he served on the Council of the British Numismatic Society, as Secretary and President of the London Numismatic Club and as Treasurer of the British Association of Numismatic Societies. He was a member of several other numismatic organizations and was also an honorary life member of the Essex Numismatic Society. He contributed dozens of articles to the numismatic press, from "*The Coins of the Grand Princes of Kiev*" in Seaby's Coin and Medal Bulletin in 1963 to his article "*Aristobulos of Chalcis and Salome*" in *Coins & Antiquities* in 1999 the final year of

that periodical. After that his writing was curtailed due to failing vision and other health problems but he still managed to finish one major work and several articles in *Caesaromagus*, the publication of the Essex Numismatic Society. Some of his articles were also republished in the Numismatics International Bulletin.

Michael was a meticulous researcher of historical and numismatic subjects. He held a Bachelor's degree in Languages, specializing in Russian, Spanish, German and French and also held a Master's degree from Cambridge. Those studies naturally pointed him to a career where his multi-lingual abilities would be of use.

He joined the Foreign and Colonial Office in 1958 and served as British Vice-Consul in Ecuador from 1965 to 1968, whence his interest in the coinage of Ecuador. His principal work, *A Numismatic History of Ecuador*, was a detailed, scholarly masterpiece with 394 pages that included dozens of official Ecuadorian documents translated into English. Previously he had co-authored the second edition of "*The Coins of Ecuador*", published by Almanzar's Coins of the World in 1973. His own extensive collection of Ecuadorian coins, sold by Glendenning's in February of 1977 is generally recognized as one of the more important reference works for the serious collector of Ecuadorian coins.

As mentioned above his first major posting at the FCO was to Quito as the British Vice-Consul which was followed by similar postings to Beirut and Athens. Subsequently he was posted as the British Consul to the Philippines and later to Spain and also served as Relieving Consul in Zimbabwe, Venezuela and France at various times. Throughout his decades of service he also spent time in various positions at the FCO in London.

Both his step brother Keith and his step sister Shirley knew Michael all their lives as the families were neighbors and close friends. After the sibling's father died followed by Michael's mother, the surviving parents eventually married. Michael enjoyed having a new combined family.

He visited his step brother Keith in Australia on several occasions and his travels took him to various countries visiting relatives and friends where he was much welcomed and respected. In Australia Michael accompanied

Keith and other family to various places including New South Wales and the Great Dividing Range, Queensland and the Great Barrier Reef. He also revisited Ecuador on several occasions including at least one trip to the Galapagos Islands where he took great pleasure in visiting with Margret Wittmer the author of *Floreana: A Woman's Pilgrimage to the Galapagos*.

Michael lived in Westminster for many years and enjoyed the advantages of living in London. When his health became a problem he moved from his flat in Westminster to The Hawthorns Residential Home in Eastbourne, East Sussex. Due to various infirmities his ability to travel was greatly reduced but he continued to meet family and friends in Eastbourne as well as in London when his health permitted.

He lived at The Hawthorns for several years until he died, keeping busy with various societies, including the Ecuadorian Society, as well as several Numismatic and Philatelic Societies.

Michael is sorely missed by his many friends and correspondents as well as by the residents and management of The Hawthorns.

Dale Seppa

